

Connect Global Week Five Report

Main Activities and Group Dynamics:

During the 5th week of the program, participants engaged in conversations about personal experiences and the perceptions of their own lives as well as the lives of their peers. In the first part of the session, some groups did the Sharing Circles activity, which allows students to be heard and practice their active listening skills. During this activity, students are divided into 2 circles based on the topic they selected, and then take turns sharing and asking clarifying questions, to allow the group to engage with differences on a critical or sensitive issue in an authentic, meaningful way.

Other groups did the Life Stories activity, which gave participants an opportunity to understand each other's perspectives more deeply, consider the underlying factors that shape different perspectives, and continue building relationships amongst the group. Facilitators shared stories about students who prepared very good questions and took time to reflect upon what their peers are sharing. During the free-flowing discussions, groups discussed topics such as inequality, gender issues, the role of religion in society, and stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings.

Facilitators noted last week's dynamics as "good" or "excellent", and reported that students are getting more comfortable sharing their thoughts and asking critical questions. As they closed the sessions, participants shared their thoughts about how their communication skills are developing and shared positive feedback on their growing ability to express their opinions and share their thoughts more openly.

Attendance & Technology:

This week, the number of students absent from their sessions was high, with a number of students also coming late to their sessions. We would highly appreciate your support in **reminding your students that their attendance and participation remain crucial to the group's dynamic and to making the most out of their virtual exchange experience**. Please also remind them that students who do not attend 75% of their sessions will not be eligible to receive the Certificate of Participation.

On the technical front, no major issues were reported by facilitators or participants. A very small number of students faced technical issues that were addressed effectively by our Technical Support team.

This Week:

This week, participants will select a topic and will deeply explore one or two issues that they identified as a global or social challenge. Now that students have shared their interviews with the group last Thursday, groups will also be discussing their interviews with their peers during the sessions. These discussions will allow all participants to share their respective communities' voices with others around the world, and explore perspectives and ideas that may not have been shared in their group before.